DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 426 972 SP 038 267

TITLE	Review of Florida's Teacher Certification System Administered by the Department of Education. Report No. 95-10.
INSTITUTION	Florida State Legislature, Tallahassee.; Florida State Legislature, Tallahassee. Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability.
PUB DATE	1995-10-23
NOTE	39p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Florida State Legislature, Office of Program Analysis and Government Accountability, 111 West Madison Street, Room 312, Post Office Box 1735, Tallahassee, FL 32302; Tel: 904-488-0021 or Tel: 800-531-2477 (Toll Free); Fax: 904-487-3804.
PUB TYPE	Reports - General (140)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; Knowledge Base for Teaching; Preservice Teacher Education; Student Evaluation of Teacher Performance; *Teacher Certification; *Teacher Competencies; *Teacher Evaluation; Teacher Qualifications; Teaching Skills
IDENTIFIERS	*Florida; Teacher Knowledge

ABSTRACT

This report presents the results of a review of Florida's teacher certification system, administered by the Department of Education. The review addressed: (1) how Florida should regulate teachers to ensure that they are professionally qualified and possess the credentials, knowledge, and skills to provide a quality education; (2) who should administer teacher certification; and (3) whether a process has been established to assess whether the current teacher certification system is effectively meeting its intent. Conclusions and recommendations include: Florida would not be assuring that its teachers were professionally qualified if it did not regulate teachers or regulate teachers using registration; the disadvantages of licensure warrant caution; the Department of Education should administer a teacher certification system; Florida needs to establish a thorough certification system; Florida's certification requirements are similar to those of other states; performance measures need to be developed; and the proposed certification system does not include a student performance assessment element. Recommendations focus on: the type of performance-based teacher certification system to adopt; what the State Board of Education needs to ensure when approving a performance-based system; and the need for the Board of Education to develop goals and objectives for teacher certification. The appendix presents a response from the Department of Education. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

REPORT NO. 95-10

ED 426 972

STATE OF FLORIDA

OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

REVIEW OF

FLORIDA'S TEACHER CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

ADMINISTERED BY THE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

October 23, 1995

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

K. Hutchinson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SP038267

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability was established by the 1994 Florida Legislature to play a major role in reviewing the performance of state agencies under performance-based budgeting and to increase the visibility and usefulness of performance audits. The Office was staffed by transferring the Program Audit Division staff of the Auditor General's Office to the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. The Office is a unit of the Office of the Auditor General but operates independently and reports to the Legislature.

This Office conducts studies and issues a variety of reports, such as policy analyses, justification reviews, program evaluations, and performance audits. These reports provide in-depth analyses of individual state programs and functions. Reports may focus on a wide variety of issues, such as:

- Whether a program is effectively serving its intended purpose;
- Whether a program is operating within current revenue resources;
- Goals, objectives, and performance measures used to monitor and report program accomplishments;
- Structure and design of a program to accomplish its goals and objectives; and
- Alternative methods of providing program services or products.

The objective of these reports is to provide accurate, reliable information that the Legislature or an agency can use to improve public programs.

Copies of this report in print or alternate accessible format may be obtained by contacting Report Production by voice at (904) 488-0021 or (800) 531-2477 or (904) 487-3804/FAX.

Permission is granted to reproduce this report.

State of Florida

OFFICE OF PROGRAM POLICY ANALYSIS AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

JAMES L. CARPENTER
INTERIM DIRECTOR

October 23, 1995

The President of the Senate,
the Speaker of the House of Representatives,
and the Legislative Auditing Committee

I have directed that a review be made of Florida's Teacher Certification System administered by the Department of Education. The results of the review are presented to you in this report. This review was made as a part of an ongoing program of performance auditing as mandated by Section 11.51(1), Florida Statutes. This review was conducted by Kim McDougal under the supervision of Jane Fletcher.

We wish to express our appreciation to the staff of the Department of Education for their assistance.

Respectfully yours,

James L. Carpenter

James L. Carpenter
Interim Director

111 WEST MADISON STREET ■ ROOM 312 ■ POST OFFICE BOX 1735 ■ TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32302
904/488-0021 ■ SUNCOM 278-0021 ■ FAX 904/487-3804

Contents

SUMMARY i

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF REVIEW 1

CHAPTER II FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 5

Section 1
Approaches to
Regulating Teachers

Florida should continue to use certification as a means of regulating its teachers in order to ensure that teachers possess the skills necessary to provide a quality education. 5

Section 2
Organizational Placement
of Teacher Certification

The Department of Education should continue to administer the Teacher Certification System. However, the Department of Business and Professional Regulation is also a viable alternative to administer the System. 11

Section 3
Florida's Teacher
Certification System

Neither the Department of Education nor the Florida Education Standards Commission have established goals and objectives for assessing whether present teacher certification requirements are meeting statutory intent. Florida's Teacher Certification System has minimum requirements designed to ensure that teachers are qualified. However, the System does not assess whether teachers have the knowledge and skills to provide a quality education by promoting student learning. Florida's System should use teacher and student performance assessments for initial certification and recertification to ensure that teachers are effective in promoting student learning. 16

LIST OF APPENDICES

A. Response From the Department of Education 27

SUMMARY

No. 95-10

Review of Florida's Teacher Certification System

Purpose

This review addressed three areas:

- How should Florida regulate teachers in order to ensure that they are professionally qualified and possess the credentials, knowledge, and skills to provide a quality education?
- Who should administer teacher certification? and
- Has a process been established to assess whether the current Teacher Certification System is effectively meeting its intent?

Background

Florida regulates individuals who teach in public schools by requiring that they be certified. Section 231.145, F.S., provides that the purpose of teacher certification is to protect the educational interests of students, parents, and the public by assuring that teachers in this state are professionally qualified. The state requires teachers to renew their certificate every five years to promote continued professional competency. As of May 1995, there were 195,623 certified teachers in Florida.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The general rationale for regulating occupations and professions is that the state should use its police power to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens by ensuring quality in services offered to the public.

Teachers Should Be Regulated Through Certification

Teachers should be regulated to ensure that: they are qualified; the profession has minimum standards; professionalism is increased; accountability is provided to the state; and continuity is maintained between districts.

We evaluated the feasibility of three regulatory approaches (licensure, certification, and registration) and the effect of not regulating teachers. We concluded that the state would not be assuring that its teachers were professionally qualified and meet certain uniform criteria for employment

if it did not regulate teachers or regulated teachers using registration. The advantages of licensure appear to be very beneficial to the public and the profession. However, the disadvantages (lack of accessibility and flexibility) warrant caution in utilizing licensure. Certification, as a regulation policy, provides some degree of both minimum knowledge and protection of the public, while remaining flexible for applicants. Certification establishes standards to help ensure that teachers are qualified, provides a mechanism to oversee the teaching profession, and enhances professionalism for certified teachers. Consequently, the Legislature should continue to require that teachers be certified.

Department of Education Should Administer Teacher Certification System

Currently, the Department of Education is statutorily assigned the responsibility for certifying Florida's teachers. However, we evaluated the feasibility of other organizational placement options: the Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), the Education Standards Commission, school districts, professional associations (i.e., Florida Association of Science Teachers, Florida Education Associated-United, Florida Teaching Profession/National Education Association), and a private organization (privatization).

Each of the options offer advantages and disadvantages. However, unlike the other options, DOE appears to meet most of the criteria used to assess the options. If the Legislature chooses to transfer the Teacher Certification System to another entity, another option would be DBPR. Although DBPR is the only other entity that has experience in regulating a profession, continuity with other support services for teacher certification may be impaired. For example, DOE offers teacher services in the areas of staff development and teacher education. We, therefore, concluded that the Department of Education should retain responsibility for administering the Teacher Certification System.

A Process Has Not Been Established to Assess Whether the Teacher Certification System Is Meeting Its Intent

Florida should establish a certification system that evaluates the relationship between certification requirements, teacher performance, and student performance to determine whether the System is meeting its intent of ensuring that teachers are providing quality education. The teacher performance assessment element currently included in the System could be improved. In addition, the student performance assessment element does not require evidence of an applicant's success in fostering learning as a certification requirement.

Florida's Certification Requirements Are Similar to Those of Other States

Florida is similar to 15 other states we reviewed in that its teacher certification system includes educational, testing, and teacher-centered performance assessment as initial requirements for certification. The educational requirement in Florida's Teacher Certification System is similar to the educational requirement of other states. Every state we reviewed requires prospective teachers to pass at least one test. Eight states, including Florida, have a classroom observation component to assess the teachers performance in the classroom. The minimums for these requirements, however, vary among the states.

Performance Measures Need to Be Developed

Neither the Department of Education nor the Florida Education Standards Commission (ESC) have established goals and objectives for assessing whether teacher certification is meeting the intent established in statute. Section 231.145, F.S., provides that teachers certified in the state possess the credentials, knowledge, and skills necessary to provide quality education. Clearly defined goals and measures should be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher certification in meeting its intended outcome.

Although outcome measures for assessing the effectiveness of the Teacher Certification System have not been developed, the Department has established some process-oriented efficiency measures to use in evaluating its implementation of the teacher certification requirements. Process-oriented efficiency measures can provide information that is useful in operational planning and internal budgeting efforts.

Proposed Certification System Does Not Include a Student Performance Assessment Element

There is a nationwide trend in teacher certification that is centered on using student accomplishments as an element in the process of certifying teachers. None of the 15 states we reviewed have a student-centered performance assessment element in their teacher certification system. Florida, however, is in the process of developing a teacher certification system that could include a student performance element. Although the proposed new system under development by the Education Standards Commission incorporates a teacher-centered performance assessment element, it does not include a student performance assessment element to evaluate whether teachers should be certified. A critical issue in implementing such a certification element will be determining the mechanism or instrument used to document evidence of student learning gains.

Recommendations

The Legislature should adopt a performance-based teacher certification system that contains both teacher-based and student-based performance assessment elements for initial certification and recertification.

The State Board of Education, in approving a performance-based teacher certification system, should ensure that the system: (1) includes student performance indicators needed to assess whether teachers possess the competencies needed to achieve the student performance standards in Blueprint 2000; (2) establishes a framework for the renewal of teaching certificates that includes student and teacher performance; and (3) contains quality assurance policies and procedures to help ensure the system will be uniformly and consistently implemented. The Department and the Education Standards Commission should work together in developing this performance-based certification system.

The State Board of Education should also develop goals and objectives for teacher certification. The Department, assisted by the Education Standards Commission, should identify specific goals and objectives that could be used to assess the overall effectiveness of the certification

requirements. The Department and the Commission should also develop outcome measures and performance benchmarks to assess progress towards achieving the goals of teacher certification. Both intermediate and long-term outcome measures should be developed to assess the effectiveness of teacher certification. Information on the effectiveness of teacher certification should be reported to the Legislature on an annual basis. The Legislature should use this information in determining whether changes should be made to the certification requirements established in law.

Agency Response

The Commissioner of the Department of Education (DOE), in his response to our report, agreed with our conclusions that teachers should be regulated through certification and that certification should be administered by DOE. He stated, however, that the quality assurance component of certification should be further examined by the Teacher Preparation and Certification Task Force which begins meeting shortly.

Review of Florida's Teacher Certification System

CHAPTER I Introduction: Purpose of Review

Purpose and Scope

The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability reviews programs as part of its responsibility to provide information the Legislature can use to improve program accountability and allocate limited public resources. This review was made in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and accordingly included appropriate performance auditing and evaluation methods. This review of the Department of Education's Teacher Certification System addressed three areas:

- How should Florida regulate teachers in order to ensure that they are professionally qualified and possess the credentials, knowledge, and skills to provide a quality education?
- Who should administer teacher certification? and
- Has a process been established to assess whether the current Teacher Certification System is effectively meeting its intent?

Background

Section 231.145, F.S., provides that the purpose of teacher certification is to protect the educational interests of students, parents, and the public by assuring that teachers in this state are professionally qualified. Teachers certified in Florida must possess the credentials, knowledge, and skills necessary to provide quality education in the state. Certification requirements were designed to assure that teachers in public schools possess an adequate knowledge of teaching methods and relevant subject matter competence and can demonstrate an acceptable level of professional performance. In addition, the state requires teachers to renew their certificate every five years to promote continued professional competency.

Teachers may obtain certification in one or more subject areas. The state currently issues 53 types of academic teaching certificates in different subject areas and grade levels. Examples of the types of certificates a teacher may obtain include Art, History, Physics, Middle Grades Social Sciences, Physically Impaired, and School Social Worker. As of May 1995, there were 195,623 certified teachers in Florida. [1]

The current certification system is predicated on a four-step process. First a prospective teacher must apply for a statement of academic eligibility that allows an applicant to seek employment in the Florida Public School system. To receive a statement of academic eligibility an applicant must: be at least 18 years of age; uphold the principles of both the U.S. and Florida constitutions; hold a bachelor's degree or higher; meet specialization (course work) requirements in a subject area; and obtain a 2.5 Grade Point Average in a specialization area (for each subject to be shown on the certificate). The second step involves the teacher obtaining a two-year non-renewable temporary certificate. The requirements of the two-year temporary certificate are: hold a valid statement of academic eligibility; obtain full-time employment in a Florida public, state supported, or non-public school with an approved Professional Orientation Program; and submit fingerprints to the employing school district. This certificate allows the applicant (up to two years), while teaching in the classroom, to complete any needed requirements for the professional certificate. The third step involves the teacher obtaining a five-year renewable professional certificate. The requirements for this certificate are: meet requirements for the two-year nonrenewable temporary certificate; satisfy the professional preparation (education courses) requirements; present passing scores on the professional education test, College Level Academic Skills Test, and Subject Area Test; successfully complete a professional orientation program. The fourth step is recertification. Teachers must renew their certificate every five years through one of four options: (1) earning a minimum of 6 semester hours of college

[1] The scope of our review was limited to the certification of individuals to teach academic courses, such as Math, History, and Art. We did not review degreed and nondegreed vocational certification.

credits, (2) passing two subject area tests, (3) earning 120 in-service points, or (4) a combination thereof.

During the 1995 Legislative session the Legislature revised the teacher certification renewal process by shifting the administrative responsibilities for certificate renewal from the Department of Education to the districts. Effective January 1, 1996, school districts in Florida will be responsible for renewing state issued professional certificates for teachers employed in their district. The districts may charge a fee not to exceed the fee charged by the Department for renewal. However, the districts must submit $20 of that fee to the Department to cover the cost of the maintenance and operation of the statewide data base and costs incurred in printing and mailing renewed certificates. The Department is responsible for renewing state issued professional certificates for individuals who are not employed by a school board (teachers employed in private schools).

Organization

The State Board of Education establishes the rules and regulations needed to implement teacher certification. The Florida Education Standards Commission and the Education Practices Commission, established pursuant to ss. 231.545 and 231.261, F.S., respectively, have major roles in the implementation of teacher certification. The Education Standards Commission advises and makes recommendations to the State Board and the Legislature on standards for certification, approval of teacher education programs, and professional conduct and the code of ethics. The Education Practices Commission has final authority to take appropriate disciplinary action against certified teachers as provided for in law, which includes denying, revoking, or suspending certificates.

The Department of Education is responsible for implementing the teacher certification rules and regulations established by the State Board. The Department also advises and makes recommendations to the State Board of Education and the Legislature on matters concerning teacher certification. Within the Department of Education, several bureaus and offices are involved in the implementation of

teacher certification. However, the Bureau of Teacher Certification within the Division of Human Resource Development is the entity that is primarily responsible for implementing teacher certification. The Bureau is responsible for determining the eligibility of applicants for certification and issuing the appropriate certificate. The Bureau also provides certification information and assistance to applicants.

Funding

The Legislature requires that the Department's certification activities be self-supporting. Department certification activities are funded from the Educational Certification and Service Trust fund, which is comprised primarily of teacher certification fees. The State Board of Education established a $56 teacher certification application fee. For fiscal year 1993-94 total receipts for the Trust Fund were $3.4 million. Certification and recertification application fees accounted for $3.1 million or 91% of the Trust Fund receipts. [2] Total expenditures for fiscal year 1993-94 were $3.3 million. Salaries accounted for $2.2 million, or 69%, of the expenditures. The Bureau of Teacher Certification had 47 full-time equivalent positions as of September 1995.

[2] The remaining 9% of the Trust Fund receipts were generated through deposits in transit (7%), fingerprint receipts (1%), investment income (1%) and miscellaneous receipts (1%).

CHAPTER II Findings and Recommendations

Section 1 Approaches to Regulating Teachers

Florida should continue to use certification as a means of regulating its teachers in order to ensure that teachers possess the skills necessary to provide a quality education.

Background

The general rationale for regulating occupations and professions is that the state should use its police power to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens by ensuring quality in services offered to the public.

To determine how Florida should regulate its teachers we reviewed the Florida Statutes, State Board of Education Rules, and relevant literature. Additionally, we interviewed teachers, members of the general public, conducted two group discussions and interviewed education staff in 16 states. [3]

We found that teachers and members of the public perceived that the teaching profession needs to be regulated. Of the 50 members of the general public that we surveyed 49, (98%) indicated that teachers should be regulated. The members of the general public that we surveyed gave the following reasons for why they believed the state should regulate teachers: to ensure quality, subject matter knowledge and training, and ensure that the profession has minimum qualifications. Of the 100 teachers we surveyed, 96 indicated that the teaching profession should be regulated. Some of the reasons provided for the need to certify teachers included: to ensure that teachers are qualified, have subject matter knowledge and training, and that the profession has minimum standards and

[3] Group discussions consisted of Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability staff, DOE staff, House Education Committee staff, Florida Association of Colleges and Teacher Education representative, Postsecondary Education Planning Commission staff, Education Standards Commission staff, and Florida School Board Association staff.

competencies; to increase professionalism, accountability to the state, and continuity between districts.

Regulatory Approaches

Given the perception that teachers need to be regulated, we reviewed different types of regulatory approaches that are available. We identified three approaches from our review of the literature: licensure, certification, and registration. We also evaluated the impact of no regulation. The basic distinction between certification and licensure is that "certification" in most professions refers to certification of a practitioner's knowledge, whereas "licensure" refers to permission to practice by a state government. Licensure and certification are similar in that both require that some level of minimum competency or predetermined qualifications be met. However, there is considerable variation among professions with regard to licensure and certification requirements. For example, certification requirements for some professions may be more stringent than others. Furthermore, some professions require an applicant to obtain certification before being granted a license to practice. In Florida, teachers are regulated through certification. Applicants do not have to be certified to begin teaching. Rather, they are allowed up to two years, while teaching, to meet all requirements necessary to obtain their teaching certificate. [4] Registration, however, only requires that an individual file his or her name and address with a designated agency; there are no minimum competency requirements.

Criteria for Evaluating Approaches

From our reviews of statutes, rules, and literature and our interviews with Department staff and stakeholders, we identified six criteria to be used as a basis for evaluating the approaches. Those criteria are:

- **Accountability to Public** -- Ability to demonstrate to the public that minimum standards and qualifications are being met;

- **Consistency Across the State** -- Ability to ensure that teachers in all school districts meet certain

[4] Individuals who teach in non-public schools in Florida do not have to be certified.

uniform or consistent criteria as a condition of employment;

- **Professionally Qualified Teachers** -- Protects the educational interests of students and the public by assuring that teachers possess the credentials, knowledge, and skills necessary to provide quality education;

- **Accessibility** -- Allows access into the teaching profession in terms of requirements that must be met;

- **Flexibility** -- Provides latitude within the profession to teach various subjects; and

- **Professionalism** -- Promotes professionalism of the teaching profession by establishing some expectations of its members.

Analysis of Regulatory Approaches

Our analysis was designed to evaluate the feasibility of implementing various regulatory approaches using the above criteria. Additionally, for the purpose of analysis we assumed that all of these regulatory approaches would be self-supporting. Currently the teacher certification program implemented by the Department is self-supported by applicant fees. Our analysis of each approach, based on the six criteria, is summarized in Exhibit 1. In addition, we describe the advantages and disadvantages for each of the four approaches in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 1: Assessment of Regulatory Approaches

Approach/Criteria	No Regulation	Registration	Certification	Licensure
Accountability to the Public	Does not provide a mechanism of accountability	Provides limited accountability	Provides a mechanism of accountability for those who are certified	Provides a mechanism of accountability for those who are licensed
Consistency Across the State	Does not ensure that teachers in all school districts meet certain uniform criteria as a condition of employment	Does not ensure that teachers in all school districts meet certain uniform criteria as a condition of employment	Provides assurance that teachers in all school districts meet certain uniform criteria as a condition of employment	Provides assurance that teachers in all school districts meet certain uniform criteria as a condition of employment
Professionally Qualified Teachers	Does not provide any assurance that teachers are professionally qualified	Does not provide any assurance that teachers are professionally qualified	Provides some assurance that teachers are professionally qualified as the certified teachers must meet certain requirements	Provides some assurance that teachers are professionally qualified as licensed teachers would have to meet certain requirements
Accessibility	Very accessible, as teacher would not have to meet any requirements to enter into the teaching profession	Very accessible, as registration would be the only requirement to enter into the teaching profession	Some accessibility, as persons choosing to teach do not have be certified (teachers in non-public schools are not required to be certified)	Limits accessibility, as persons choosing to teach must be licensed
Flexibility	Provides total flexibility, as there would not be any requirements to teach a particular subject	Provides total flexibility, as there would not be any requirements to teach a particular subject	Provides certified teachers limited flexibility to teach in different areas	Provides no flexibility, as all teachers would be licensed in specific subject areas
Professionalism	Would not enhance professionalism, as expectations for the profession do not exist	Would not enhance professionalism, as expectations for the profession do not exist	Enhances professionalism, as certified teachers are expected to meet specific requirements	Enhances professionalism, as licensed teachers are expected to meet specific requirements

Source: Developed by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability.

Exhibit 2: Advantages and Disadvantages of Regulatory Approaches

Approaches	Advantages	Disadvantages
No Regulation	1. Provides access to all persons 2. Provides flexible hiring practices 3. No bureaucracy	1. Does not help assure that teachers are professionally qualified (knowledge, skills, competencies) since there would be no statewide requirements
Registration	1. Provides access to all persons 2. Provides flexible hiring practices 3. List of active participants 4. Minimal bureaucracy	1. Does not help assure that teachers are professionally qualified (knowledge, skills, competencies) since there would be no statewide requirements
Certification	1. Provides access as persons are not required to be certified to teach in non-public schools 2. Establishes some standards to help ensure the certified teachers are professionally qualified (knowledge, skills, competencies) 3. Mechanism in place to oversee profession 4. Enhances professionalism for certified personnel as expectations have been established for certified teachers	1. Allows non-certified personnel in the classroom to teach as certification is not required to teach in non-public schools 2. Involves bureaucracy beyond the registration process as prospective teachers must provide documentation to the state that they have met the requirements to be certified 3. Limited hiring practices since public schools require teachers to be certified
Licensure	1. Establishes some standards to help ensure that all teachers are professionally qualified (knowledge, skills, competencies) 2. Mechanism in place to oversee profession 3. Enhances professionalism as expectations would have been established for every teacher	1. Provides limited access as persons are required to be licensed to teach 2. Limited hiring practices since all teachers would have to be licensed 3. Involves bureaucracy beyond the registration process as prospective teachers must provide documentation to the state that they have met the requirements to be licensed

Source: Developed by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability.

Conclusions and Recommendations

We concluded that the state would not be assuring that its teachers were professionally qualified and meet certain uniform criteria for employment if it did not regulate teachers or regulated teachers using registration. The advantages of licensure appear to be very beneficial to the public and the profession. However, the disadvantages (lack of accessibility and flexibility) warrant caution in utilizing licensure. Certification, as a regulation policy, provides some degree of both minimum knowledge and protection of the public, while remaining flexible for applicants. Certification establishes standards to help ensure that teachers are qualified, provides a mechanism to oversee the teaching profession, and enhances professionalism for certified teachers. We therefore recommend that the Legislature continue to require that teachers be certified.

Section 2 Organizational Placement of Teacher Certification

The Department of Education should continue to administer the Teacher Certification System. However, the Department of Business and Professional Regulation is also a viable alternative to administer the System.

Currently, the Department of Education is statutorily assigned the responsibility for certifying Florida's teachers. To identify entities that could certify teachers, we reviewed the Florida Statutes, State Board of Education Rules, and relevant literature. Additionally, we interviewed teachers, members of the general public, conducted two group discussions and interviewed Education staff in 16 states. [5] We identified the following placement options: the Department of Education (DOE), the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), the Education Standards Commission, school districts, professional associations (i.e., Florida Association of Science Teachers, Florida Education Associated-United, Florida Teaching Profession/National Education Association), and a private organization (privatization).

Criteria for Assessing Placement Options

From our reviews of statutes, rules, and literature and our interviews with Department staff and stakeholders, we identified the following criteria to be used to assess the placement options:

- Experience with regulating a profession;
- Consistency in implementation (consistent application of certification criteria across the state);
- Accessible to applicants (convenience);
- Continuity with other teacher services;

[5] Group discussions consisted of Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability staff, DOE staff, House Education Committee staff, Florida Association of Colleges and Teacher Education representative, Postsecondary Education Planning Commission staff, Education Standards Commission staff, and Florida School Board Association staff.

- Provides accountability and control (checks and balances);
- Whether a similar placement is used in other states, and;
- Ease of monitoring for compliance (availability of and accessibility to documents).

Additionally, we made three assumptions in assessing options:

- The state will continue to set policy regarding the Teacher Certification System requirements and issue certificates;
- The Certification System would continue to be self-supporting; and
- The alternative entity would assume the same responsibilities that the Bureau of Teacher Certification currently has in implementing certification requirements, including processing applications, determining certification eligibility, collecting fees, and providing customer service to applicants.

Analysis of Placement Options

Our analysis was designed to evaluate the feasibility of placing the Teacher Certification System with various entities and to identify which option would be the most effective in administering teacher certification. Our analysis of each option is summarized in Exhibit 3. In addition, we describe advantages and disadvantages for each of the placement options in Exhibit 4.

Exhibit 3: Analysis of Placement Options

Placement Options/Criteria	DOE	DBPR	Education Standards Commission	School Districts	Professional Association	Private Organization
Experience With Regulating a Profession	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Consistency in Implementation	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Accessible to Applicants	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
Continuity With Other Teacher Services	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Provides Accountability and Control	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Used in Other States We Reviewed (n=15)	Yes (12 States)	No	Yes (3 States)	No [1]	No	No
Ease of Monitoring for Compliance	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

[1] We identified two states (New York and Illinois) that have previously partially decentralized teacher certification. New York City and Chicago issued their own teaching certificates. However, in both cases the teacher certification function reverted back to the state.

Source: Developed by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability.

Exhibit 4: Advantages and Disadvantages of Placement Options

Placement Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
Department of Education (DOE)	1. Continuity with other teacher services 2. Centralized 3. Prior experience certifying teachers 4. Continuity of policy and process 5. Easily monitored for compliance	1. Detached from other state regulatory functions 2. Not convenient for teachers (service not locally provided)
Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR)	1. No conflict regulating its own profession 2. Centralized 3. Oversight at state level 4. Experience with regulating professions	1. No prior experience regulating school instructional personnel 2. Not convenient for teachers (service not locally provided)
Education Standards Commission (ESC)	1. Professionals regulating their profession 2. Continuity of policy and process 3. Oversight at state level	1. Potential conflict with professionals regulating their own profession 2. No prior experience regulating a profession
School Districts	1. Provides service close to teachers 2. Continuity between employer and certification entity	1. Duplication of certification function among districts 2. Inconsistencies between districts in decision making 3. Additional staff would likely be required 4. State level monitoring and accountability more difficult as information systems and documents would have to be maintained by 67 district offices across the state
Professional Associations: (i.e., Florida Association of Science Teachers; Florida Education Associated-United; Florida Teaching Profession/National Education Association)	1. May better know needs of teachers 2. Providing service close to teachers	1. No association currently unified 2. Not all teachers belong to an association 3. No prior regulatory experience 4. Detached from other regulatory functions 5. May have difficulty monitoring
Private Organization	1. May have reduced bureaucracy	1. Organization may not have experience regulating a profession 2. State may have difficulty in oversight of organization

Source: Developed by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability.

Conclusions and Recommendations

We analyzed the feasibility of placing the Teacher Certification System with various entities. Each of the options offer advantages and disadvantages. However, unlike the other options, DOE appears to meet most of the criteria used to assess the options. If the Legislature chooses to transfer the Teacher Certification System to another entity, another option would be DBPR. Although DBPR is the only other entity that has had experience in regulating a profession, continuity with other support services for teacher certification may be impaired. For example, DOE offers teacher services in the areas of staff development and teacher education. We, therefore, recommend that the Department of Education retain responsibility for administering the Teacher Certification System.

Section 3
Florida's Teacher Certification System

Neither the Department of Education nor the Florida Education Standards Commission have established goals and objectives for assessing whether present teacher certification requirements are meeting statutory intent. Florida's Teacher Certification System has minimum requirements designed to ensure that teachers are qualified. However, the System does not assess whether teachers have the knowledge and skills to provide a quality education by promoting student learning. Florida's System should use teacher and student performance assessments for initial certification and recertification to ensure that teachers are effective in promoting student learning.

Certification requirements are designed to assure that teachers in public schools possess an adequate knowledge of teaching methods and relevant subject matter competence and can demonstrate an acceptable level of performance to protect the educational interests of students, parents, and the public at large by assuring that teachers are professionally qualified.

To determine how Florida's Teacher Certification System ensures that teachers possess the necessary qualifications to provide a quality education we reviewed:

- The major requirements of teacher certification systems in Florida and other states;
- New approaches to teacher certification; and
- Student-centered performance assessment for certification.

Finally, we sought to determine whether Florida's Teacher Certification System has been evaluated as to whether it is meeting its statutory intent of ensuring that teachers have the knowledge and skills to provide a quality education.

Major Requirements of Teacher Certification Systems

We reviewed the literature and teacher certification systems in other states to identify requirements used by other states to ensure that teachers possess the qualifications necessary to provide quality education. We conducted telephone interviews with certification personnel in 15 states. [6] Our selection of the states was based on student population, demographic data, geographic location, and literature that identified states with innovative certification programs. Based on our review of the literature and teacher certification systems in other states, we identified three major requirements of certification systems. We found that Florida is similar to other states in that its teacher certification system includes educational, testing, and teacher-centered performance assessment as initial requirements for certification. The minimums for these requirements, however, vary among the states (see Exhibit 5):

- **Educational Requirement** -- Indicates the highest degree required for certification. Academic background or ability has historically been the primary criteria that states use for determining a potential teacher's eligibility for certification. Specifically, educational requirements for certification generally include: (a) academic degree level (i.e., bachelor's or master's degree); (b) program or course of study (includes specified coursework in subject to be taught and education courses); and (c) grade point average (GPA).

  The educational requirement in Florida's Teacher Certification System is similar to the educational requirement of other states. States typically require at least a bachelors degree and some states, such as Florida, also have a grade point average requirement. However, one state requires its teachers to have a masters degree.

[6] We interviewed state certification personnel in Arizona, California, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

- **Testing Requirement** -- Indicates what types of tests are required for certification. Tests are generally used to assess: (1) mastery of basic skills and general knowledge; (2) knowledge of subject matter to be taught; and (3) knowledge of the methods of teaching (professional knowledge).

  Every state we reviewed requires prospective teachers to pass at least one test. The number of required tests that an applicant must pass ranges from one to three. Five states, including Florida, require three types of tests: basic skills, subject matter, and professional knowledge tests. Arizona, Georgia and Oklahoma, however, require applicants to pass only one test. Each state has minimum educational requirements. Therefore the tests basically supplement the educational requirements. Additionally, we found Florida and Virginia, unlike the other 13 states, do not typically require an applicant to pass the required tests before teaching in the classroom.

- **Teacher Centered Performance Assessment** -- Typically conducted for initial certification and usually evaluates the classroom performance of the teacher. The performance of the prospective teacher is assessed by an administrator and/or experienced teacher who observes them in their classroom to determine if they have demonstrated specific behaviors identified as being characteristic of a successful teacher.

  Eight states, including Florida, have a classroom observation component to assess the teachers performance in the classroom. In six of the eight states this observation requirement is included as a part of a beginning teacher mentoring and assistance program. While this assessment system provides information on whether a teacher possesses the skills necessary to teach in order to be certified, it does not determine whether the teacher is actually effective.

Exhibit 5: Major Requirements of Teacher Certification Systems

State	Educational (Minimum Requirements)	Testing (Types of Required Tests)	Teacher Centered Performance Assessments
Arizona	Master's Degree or 40 Semester Hours Beyond Bachelor's Degree	Basic Skills	
California	Bachelor's Degree and 30 Semester Units	Basic Skills Subject Matter	
Florida	Bachelor's Degree and GPA Requirement	Basic Skills Subject Area Professional Knowledge	Classroom Observations in Beginning Teacher Program
Georgia	Bachelor's Degree	Subject Matter	
Illinois	Bachelor's Degree	Basic Skills Subject Area	
Kentucky	Bachelor's Degree and GPA Requirement	Basic Skills Subject Area Professional Knowledge	Classroom Observation in Beginning Teacher Program
Louisiana	Bachelor's Degree and GPA Requirement	Basic Skills Subject Area Professional Knowledge	Classroom Observation in Beginning Teacher Program
New Jersey	Bachelor's Degree	Basic Skills Subject Area	Classroom Observation in Beginning Teacher Program
New York	Master's Degree	Basic Skills Subject Area Professional Knowledge	Classroom Observation in Beginning Teacher Program
North Carolina	Bachelor's Degree	Subject Area Professional Knowledge	Classroom Observation in Beginning Teacher Program
Ohio	Bachelor's Degree	Basic Skills Subject Area Professional Knowledge	
Oklahoma	Bachelor's Degree	Subject Area	Classroom Observation in Beginning Teacher Program
Oregon	Bachelor's Degree and 45 Quarters Hours	Basic Skills Subject Area Professional Knowledge	
South Carolina	Bachelor's Degree	Subject Area Professional Knowledge	
Tennessee	Bachelor's Degree	Basic Skills Subject Area Professional Knowledge	Classroom Observation as part of Career Ladder System
Virginia	Bachelor's Degree	Basic Skills Subject Area Professional Knowledge	

Source: Developed by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability.

New Approach to Teacher Certification

Recently, the Florida Legislature and State Board of Education have authorized initiatives to strengthen and enhance the performance assessment component of Florida's certification process. Specifically, to achieve the high standards established in the state's education goals and the implementation of Blueprint 2000, the Legislature has directed the Florida Education Standards Commission to develop a performance assessment system for certification that assesses whether teachers are continuing to acquire skills and knowledge beyond the minimum competencies currently assessed under the Professional Orientation Program (POP). By establishing performance expectations beyond minimum entry level requirements, this new performance assessment system would ensure that teachers possess the skills to provide quality education.

Florida Education Standards Commission staff indicated that the new performance assessment system will be comprised of two primary parts: Educator Accomplished Practices, and a Continuum of Professional Development. The Educator Accomplished Practices are 12 generic principles and key indicators that were designed to implement the standards defined in the state's education goals. These 12 accomplished practices are intended to replace the 27 generic competencies currently assessed under POP. The generic competencies reflect the essential skills of a beginning teacher, while the accomplished practices and the accompanying indicators provide descriptions or demonstrations of an expert teacher in complex and advanced teaching skills as well as minimum beginning skills. The Continuum of Professional Development serves as a framework for continuous improvement for teachers which is based on the demonstration of knowledge and skills. Three levels of professional competency have been identified as part of this Continuum of Professional Development. The levels are pre-professional, professional, and accomplished. At the pre-professional level a beginning teacher would be expected to demonstrate entry level teaching skills based on the 12 competencies. A teacher at the accomplished professional level would be expected to demonstrate the highest knowledge and skills on the Continuum of Professional Development.

Student-Centered Performance Assessment

We also identified from our review of the literature a nationwide trend in teacher certification that is centered on using student accomplishments as an element in the process of certifying teachers. None of the 15 states we reviewed have a student-centered performance assessment element in their teacher certification system. Florida, however, is in the process of developing a teacher certification system that could include a student performance element. Although the proposed new system under development by the Education Standards Commission incorporates a teacher-centered performance assessment element, it does not include a student performance assessment element to evaluate whether teachers should be certified. Rather than focusing on courses taken, credit hours taken, and test scores for demonstrating minimal competence in basic skills, this new certification element could require evidence of a prospective teacher's success in fostering student learning in order to be certified. A critical issue in implementing such a certification element will be determining the mechanism or instrument used to document evidence of student learning gains. Oregon has included student learning gains as a requirement for student teachers in Oregon teacher education programs. During student teaching, candidates must complete two work samples that show their skill in fostering planned student learning gains.

Evaluation of Teacher Certification System

It is important that agencies develop goals, objectives, and performance measures for the programs that they administer in order that the general public, program participants, and the agency clearly understand what is to be accomplished and whether the program is meeting its intended purpose. The Florida State Comprehensive Planning Act of 1972 requires agency management to develop goals and objectives designed to help achieve the purpose of the program. A goal is defined as a long-term end toward which program activities are ultimately directed. An objective is a specific, measurable, and intermediate end that is achievable and marks progress towards a goal. In addition, the Government Performance and Accountability Act of 1994 requires state agencies to identify performance measures for programs to evaluate performance and assess

progress in achieving program goals and objectives. These identified measures are to be integrated into the agency planning and budgeting process. Furthermore, agencies are required to provide in their legislative budget requests an evaluation of the agency's progress in achieving performance standards for programs. The Department of Education, Public Schools, is scheduled to submit a performance-based budget by September 1, 1997.

Goals and Objectives

Neither the Department of Education nor the Florida Education Standards Commission (ESC) have established goals and objectives for assessing whether teacher certification is meeting the intent established in statute. Section 231.145, F.S., provides that teachers certified in the state possess the credentials, knowledge, and skills necessary to provide quality education. Clearly defined goals and measures should be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher certification in meeting its intended outcome.

Outcome Measures and Performance Benchmarks

The Department and the ESC should develop outcome measures and performance benchmarks to assess progress towards achieving the goals of teacher certification. Department managers indicated that an outcome-based measurement system for determining teachers' effectiveness would be extremely beneficial. For example, an outcome-based system could be used to verify whether teachers certified by the state possess the knowledge and skills necessary to provide a quality education.

Outcome measures can be grouped into two primary levels: intermediate measures, and long-term measures. Intermediate outcome measures provide information directly related to the customer or client served by the program, while long-term outcome measures provide information about the overall effect of a program. Intermediate outcome measures for teacher certification should provide information about the performance of certified teachers in Florida public schools. These measures could include the results of school district personnel assessments systems and opinion ratings of students, parents, and school administrators. Long-term outcome measures should be based on the premise that certification standards should help

ensure the quality of education in Florida public schools. These measures could include student performance and achievement as measured by test scores and/or other means.

Although outcome measures for assessing the effectiveness of the Teacher Certification System have not been developed, the Department has established some process-oriented efficiency measures to use in evaluating its implementation of the teacher certification requirements. Process-oriented efficiency measures can provide information that is useful in operational planning and internal budgeting efforts. Process-oriented efficiency measures for teacher certification currently used and reported on by the Department include: (a) the accuracy rate of determinations of applicant eligibility for certification made by DOE staff; (b) the number of days required to process a certification application; (c) the accuracy of information contained in the teacher certification database; and (d) the difference between expected and actual staff production standards. In addition to evaluating process performance, the Department should identify goals and objectives that can be used in assessing whether the purpose of teacher certification is being achieved.

Conclusions and Recommendations

All of the states we reviewed, including Florida, have incorporated three major requirements in their certification systems that are designed to help ensure that prospective teachers possess certain minimum competencies and knowledge. We also found that neither DOE nor the ESC has established a process for evaluating whether Florida's Teacher Certification System meets its intent of providing quality education. Some states, such as Florida, have established teacher-centered performance assessment elements in order to obtain a certificate. This element, however, does not provide a continuous assessment of teachers performance after the initial certification stage. None of the states we reviewed have incorporated student-based performance assessments as part of their certification systems.

Florida should establish a certification system that evaluates the relationship between certification requirements, teacher performance, and student performance to determine whether the System is meeting its intent of ensuring that teachers are providing quality education. The teacher performance assessment element currently included in the System could be improved. For example, the Education Standard Commission's accomplished practices and continuum for professional development could be used rather than the current minimum competencies. In addition, the student performance assessment element would require evidence of an applicant's success in fostering learning as a certification requirement. A student performance assessment system could provide individuals who meet minimum requirements, such as a Bachelor's degree and fingerprint clearance, an opportunity to obtain certification by demonstrating their ability to foster student learning.

We recommend that the Legislature adopt a performance-based teacher certification system that contains both teacher-centered and student-centered performance assessment elements for initial certification and recertification.

We recommend that the State Board of Education, in approving this performance-based teacher certification system, ensure that the system: (1) includes student performance indicators needed to assess whether teachers possess the competencies needed to achieve the student performance standards in Blueprint 2000; (2) establishes a framework for the renewal of teaching certificates that includes student and teacher performance; and (3) contains quality assurance policies and procedures to help ensure the system will be uniformly and consistently implemented. We also recommend that the Department and the Education Standards Commission work together in developing this performance-based certification system.

We recommend that the State Board of Education develop goals and objectives for teacher certification. The Department, assisted by the Education Standards Commission, should identify specific goals and objectives that could be used to assess the overall effectiveness c

certification requirements. The Department and ESC should also develop outcome measures and performance benchmarks to assess progress towards achieving the goals of teacher certification. Both intermediate and long-term outcome measures should be developed to assess the effectiveness of teacher certification. Information on the effectiveness of teacher certification should be reported to the Legislature on an annual basis. The Legislature should use this information in determining whether changes should be made to the certification requirements established in law.

List of Appendices

Appendices

A. Response From the Department of Education 27

Appendix A
Response From the Department of Education

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.45(7)(d), F.S., a list of preliminary and tentative review findings was submitted to the Commissioner of the Department of Education for his review and response.

The Commissioner's written response is reprinted herein beginning on page 28.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Frank T. Brogan
Commissioner of Education

October 13, 1995

Mr. Jim Carpenter, Interim Director
State of Florida
Office of Program Policy Analysis
and Government Accountability
111 West Madison Street, Room 312
Tallahassee, Florida 32302

Dear Mr. Carpenter:

Your report concerning Florida's Teacher Certification System has been received by my office, and I am pleased to have this opportunity to respond. The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability undertook a major effort in its examination of teacher certification and conducted a thorough and exhaustive search. Your personnel should be commended for their fair and comprehensive approach.

As per Section 11.45 (7)(d), Florida Statutes, I offer the following remarks relative to the three broad recommendations contained in Chapter II:

Finding 1. Florida should continue to use certification as a means of regulating its teachers in order to ensure that teachers possess the skills necessary to provide quality education.

Response: We agree that the Legislature should continue to certify teachers.

Finding 2. The Department of Education should continue to administer the teacher certification program; however, the Department of Business and Professional Regulation is also a viable alternative to administer this program.

The Capitol • Tallahassee, Florida 32399 • (904) 487-1785

Response: We agree that the Department of Education should retain responsibility for administering teacher certification.

Finding 3: Neither the Department of Education nor the Florida Education Standards Commission have established goals and objectives for assessing whether present teacher certification requirements are meeting statutory intent. Florida's Teacher Certification System has minimum requirements designed to ensure that teachers are qualified. However, the System does not assess whether teachers have the knowledge and skills to provide a quality education by promoting student learning. Florida's System should use teacher and student performance assessments for initial certification and recertification to ensure that teachers are effective in promoting student learning.

Response: Clearly we agree that student learning is the major responsibility of teachers. However, we believe that this component should be further studied. The role of the employer, in most cases a school board, has not been identified in this report. We seek a balance between the State and local school boards in addressing this quality assurance component. Therefore, we cannot support Finding 3 in its current form.

It is requested that this issue be further examined by the Teacher Preparation and Certification Task Force which begins meeting shortly.

Again, I thank you for your hard work and offer my appreciation to your staff.

Sincerely,

Frank T. Brogan

FTB:bcs